

The Second I Love You by urdearestmom

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The Second I Love You

hello yall season 3 was wild and i cried straight through the last half hour of ep8 thank you very much

the new content has given me inspiration, and i wanted to write something for my favourite scene because frankly while this scene is heart-warming it is also highly comedic.

mike is literally me. like actually me i feel his emotional situation entirely. we are one and the same

let me know your thoughts down below!

He feels like an idiot. All those days spent broken up could've been the last ones he ever spent with her if he hadn't caught her arms in time, and even so, she would've never gotten loose without the group's collective effort. El's sitting in front of him now, injured but alive, and Mike's brain keeps screaming at him how close he came to her slipping away forever.

Out loud, he asks, "Does that hurt?"

El grimaces. "Not bad."

He nods, covering her leg wound again and quickly bringing his eyes back to her face. "You're gonna have an awesome scar. You'll look even more badass."

The rest of the group has disappeared into the store, Nancy and Jonathan off to who knows where and Max to see what was taking Lucas and Will so long to find a bowl. Mike and El are sitting alone in the aisle for the time being, so he decides now might be a good time to try and *really* talk to her.

"Bitchin," she says, and smiles.

Mike smiles back, relieved to see a little joy in her considering the circumstances. "Yeah, bitchin."

They look away from each other for a moment and his nervousness swells. "El."

"Yeah?"

"I've been meaning to tell you something."

The way she's holding his eye contact is unnerving, but at the same time, it settles him. He knows he has her full and undivided attention.

"It's just, being... broken up, it's been hard," he starts, only to be interrupted by his walkie crackling. They're silent for a few seconds but nothing intelligible comes through, so Mike turns back to El and continues. "And, I *like* that you and Max are friends now. It's just- I was jealous at first, and- and angry, and that's why I said all that stupid stuff."

He isn't looking at her anymore, squinting at his knees, but she's still silent and listening. "And it's like, I wanted you, all to myself, and now I realize how unfair that is! And selfish! And like- I'm sorry."

El has a knowing look on her face, as if she's known this entire time that it was never really about her. He didn't lie to her because of something she did; it was the result of his own behaviour. He was an idiot, but he's learning to own up to his mistakes even if it's the last thing he wants to do.

The next thing he wants to tell her after his apology is equally as important but twice as nervewracking, and he isn't sure whether he'll be able to actually get it out but he's damn well going to try because El deserves to know.

Mike looks up at her again. "I just like, I've never felt like this, you know, with anyone before, and..." He's motioning with his hands as if that's going to explain what he's trying to say, really just delaying the words. "You know, they do say it makes you crazy," he finishes. He can feel himself turning pink.

God, he hopes she gets it.

"What makes you crazy?" El asks him. She's confused by the saying,

making it plain to Mike that she has no idea what he's talking about. *Jesus Christ.*

He pauses for an interminable second, staring. His heart is beating so fast he can almost pretend he's just run a marathon. "You never- you never heard that term?"

His mouth is drier than the Sahara Desert when she just stares at him. "You know like, the ph-phrase, 'blank makes you crazy', like the word..." He can't even say the word himself. His mouth refuses to bend around the shape of that pesky four-letter word. What kind of-

"Girlfriends?" She suggests.

"No, no, no, not- not girlfriends!"

El nods. "Boyfriends," she answers sagely.

"No, no no, no, not boyfriends either, it's like, it's like a feeling, or-"

"Feeling..."

"Yeah, like something, uhh, old people say it to each other sometimes-"

"*Old* people?"

"Yeah!" Mike feels like he's running out of breath and he can't look at El. He barely knows what he's saying at this point, struggling to manage the rising contents of his stomach and El's questioning expression. "What I- wanna say, is- that- I just- I know- that I-"

The walkie suddenly crackles again, and a familiar voice comes through. "-you copy? I repeat- is a code red!"

Mike scrambles to pick it up and extend the antenna. "Dustin?!"

"Mike!"

As Dustin tries to relay his message with Mike barely understanding through the static, El sits behind him in the same spot. He can feel her eyes on his back. He's sorry he didn't get to tell her what he was

going to tell her, but he was also going about telling her in the stupidest way possible. Why couldn't he have just said it? It's only three words, for god's sake.

Nancy and Jonathan appear out of nowhere and then so does everyone else, and before he knows it they're all back in the car headed to the mall to save their friend. It looks like Mike isn't going to get the chance to tell El how he really feels anytime soon if the Mind Flayer and whoever has Dustin trapped have anything to do with it.